

REMARKS

By this amendment, Applicant cancels claims 2, 8, 13, 14, 16, 22, 27, and 28 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, and amends claims 1, 7, 15, and 21 to incorporate the subject matter of canceled claims 2, 8, 16, and 22, respectively. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1, 3-7, 9-12, 15, 17-21, and 23-26 will be pending.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 7, 15, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,526,173 to Burns (hereinafter "Burns"); rejected claims 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Burns in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,229,437 to Schmid et al. (hereinafter "Schmid"); and rejected claims 13, 14, 27, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Burns. The Examiner also objected to claims 2, 5, 8, 11, 16, 19, 22, and 25 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 8, 16, and 22.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections under both 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) and 103(a). In order to expedite prosecution of this case, however, Applicant cancels claims 13, 14, 27, and 28, and amends claims 1, 7, 15, and 21 to incorporate the subject matter of objected to claims 2, 8, 16, and 22, respectively.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 7, 15, and 21, and their dependent claims 3-6, 9-12, 17-20, and 23-26, respectively.

Moreover, Applicant cancels remaining claims 13, 14, 27, and 28 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, thereby rendering the rejection of these claims moot.

Applicant's proposed amendments do not raise new issues, and place the present application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests entry of this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, and a timely issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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